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Jasenovac as a Space of Exception

Introduction

Through the dense morning fog, fifteen year old Ilija Ivanović could see a huddled group of women, ranging from small children to the elderly, being beaten and shoved by rifle butts towards their deaths in the killing field of Gradina. Even from a distance, Ilija could hear their mournful laments of their fate, a haunting song bidding farewell to those who remained in the camp. A young woman in the procession walked slowly towards the exit of the concentration camp, prolonging the journey by trying to nurse the child in her arms in a vain attempt to give the newborn a chance at survival that she herself did not have. Angry at the disobedience of the woman, a nearby guard beat her, knocking her into the dirt before throwing the baby into the air and impaling it with his bayonet.[1] Death was not only reserved for the mass graves at Gradina, it could strike at any moment.

This anecdote, from survivor Ilija Ivanović's memoir *Svjedok Jasenovačkog pakla*, or in English, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell* illustrates how the Jasenovac concentration camp, which existed from 1941 to 1945 in Slavonia, Croatia, functioned as a space of exception similar to that of Nazi camps. Existing scholarship on camps as spaces of exception revolves around Nazi concentration camps, while neglecting camps that other states operated during World War II. In popular culture, and at times in academia, the Balkans exist shrouded in myths, and consequently scholars must fight against exoticism, orientalism, and mythologizing. It is too simple to suggest that the Balkans are different, that the violence which occurred at Jasenovac was inevitable because of some mysterious historical element which compelled individuals in the multi-ethnic

[1] Ilija Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell*. (Mt Pleasant: Dallas Publishing Company, 2002), 150.

region to turn on each other. By looking at this memoir I reveal the similarities between Nazi prison camps, characterized as spaces of exception by Giorgio Agamben and other political geographers, and Jasenovac. The torture, violence, and death did not occur due to ancient hatreds as has been the reason given at times for the violence during World War II and the civil wars in the 1990s; rather, it is produced on an individual level as a response to a context-specific stimulus in the space of exception.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

I approach the question of Jasenovac as a space of exception from a geopolitical framework, utilizing the theories and concepts of space of exception, bare life, musselmann, and counter-conduct. Spaces of exception are the increased power structures used by governments during times of crisis: they emerge when the sovereign power suspends the law and redistributes governing powers and mechanisms in new ways. The physical and material manifestation of this sovereign power emerges in the form of the prison camp. Spaces of exception function according to different rules and laws than general society. This is not a special kind of law, but rather a suspension of juridical order itself, which keeps arbitrary decisions at the heart of all of the laws expressed in the camps. This space is where the exception becomes the rule, and violence is the inevitable result of the struggle to control and maintain this space.[2] The violent spatialization is a permanent part of the state of exception, and the divide between the prisoners who will live and those who should die is reproduced spatially.

The extension of power in spaces of exception results in the reduction of individuals' rights in the name of protecting the state. This reduction can include isolation, exclusion,

[2] Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

enclosure, and elimination of prisoners for so-called security purposes.[3] Spaces of exception are described as being gray zones, blurry areas, or spaces in-between which are governed by new rules. These spaces are simultaneously interior and exterior, where they are under a government's jurisdiction yet the rules and laws do not apply as they do to general society.[4] An example of a space of exception from the twenty-first century is that of Guantanamo Bay. Prisoners in Guantanamo are under American jurisdiction on land leased to the United States in Cuba, yet the laws regarding prisoner's rights, such as habeas corpus, do not apply and prisoners can be denied jury trials, detained without being charged, and tortured.[5]

Biopower, as defined by Michel Foucault, is a modern format for states to exercise their power over life and death, by *making* people live and *letting* them die.[6] This is contrary to the older governmental-power structure which let people live, and choose when and if to make them die. Making people live can be through healthcare, providing abundant food, and other methods of supporting quality and extension of life, while letting die can be through removing access to these resources. In the setting of a camp this can include providing or withholding clothing to shelter from the weather and extra or better food rations. To make people die is a conscious decision to use death as a weapon. Biopower is a technique for managing people through discipline; it does not extend power, but changes its core instead, as can be seen in the transition between letting and making people live and die.[7] The camp is an example of a "biopolitical paradigm of the modern", where the extreme becomes a part of daily life.[8] The camp is

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[3] Diana Martin, "From spaces of exception to 'campscapes': Palestinian refugee camps and informal settlements in Beirut," *Political Geography* 44 (2015): 9-18

[4] Claudio Minca, "Agamben's geographies of modernity," *Political Geography* 26 (2007): 78-97.

[5] Derek Gregory. "The Black Flag: Guantanamo Bay and the Space of Exception." *Geografiska Annaler, Human Geography* 88 (2006): 405-427.

[6] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[7] Thomas Lemke, *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

[8] Nikolas Rose, "The politics of life itself," *Theory, culture, and society* 18 (2001): 1-30.
Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz* (New York: Zone Books, 2000).

considered by geographer Giorgio Agamben to be "the most absolute biopolitical space that has ever been realized," because of the fact that power comes into contact with only pure biological life. [9]

These ideas about spaces of exception originate in the work of political geographers Agamben and Carl Schmitt. The lack of discussion about concentration camps and twentieth century totalitarianism is a gaping absence in Foucault's work on security; Agamben and Schmitt's work as well as that of others such as Claudio Minca, contributes to this dearth of knowledge.[10] Agamben asserts in *Remnants of Auschwitz* that a new ethical element emerged in Nazi prison camps called the gray zone where good and evil, and all elements of traditional ethics, reach a point of fusion in the space of exception. The extreme situation of spaces of exception allowed the powers of Nazi authorities to dictate a new normal of daily life, a norm which decided what was inhuman and what was human in the camp.[11] The blurred zone of indistinction in the camp is produced by an emptying of law and the creation of a realm between law and anarchy; this indistinction allows for the excessive violence performed by the authorities.[12] Elena Bellina and Paola Bonifazio in *State of Exception: Cultural Responses to the Rhetoric of Fear* state that there are four central features of states of exception: space devoid of law, a relationship to juridical order, actions that cannot be legally judged because they were in a non-place in relationship to law, and that it creates a force that constitutes power. Spaces of exception suspend human and civil rights and can act without consequence.[13] The acts which

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[9] François Debrix, "Topologies of vulnerability and the proliferation of camp life," Society and Space 33 (2015): 444-459.
[10] Minca, "Agamben's geographies of modernity," 78-97.
[11] Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz.*
[12] Rasmus Ugilt, *Giorgio Agamben: Political Philosophy* (Penrith, 2014).
[13] Elena Bellina and Paola Bonifazio, *State of Exception: Cultural Responses to the Rhetoric of Fear* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2006).

occur are beyond crime and beyond law, falling solely in the space of exception as Nazi authorities tested new forms of biopolitical control on helpless and exploited prisoners.

Spaces of exception are closely related to war, violence, and insurrection because these are all a consequence of excessive control. [14] As these spaces are produced as the state's immediate response to extreme conflict, spaces of exception are both the product and producer of violence. Spaces of exception can also result from totalitarianism which establishes the state of exception as a means to wage war and allow for the elimination of enemies and its own population alike. This space is a border, the threshold between life and death, as the lives of prisoners are reduced to bare life, void of right and value, who are to be tightly controlled in the name of security of the state.[15]

Case Study: Jasenovac

This paper analyses a memoir written by a survivor of Jasenovac. Other historical sources such as government documents or diaries operate largely in one plane, while oral histories and memoirs operate in multiple. The usefulness of such memoirs has been questioned in the past on a philosophical level. The most true witness of the atrocities of concentration camps are those who died because of them, and they cannot provide testimony, so it instead must come from those who survived.[16] As discussed by Lawrence Langer, survivor testimony is controlled by "co-temporality," where individuals have to make their recollections fit with the rest of their

[14] Agamben, *State of Exception*.
[15] Martin, "From spaces of exception to 'campscapes'".
[16] Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz*.

lives.[17] Despite these imperfections, memoirs are useful tools to analyze the prison camp experience in World War II because it is the closest to true witness that is possible.

In 1942, Ilija Ivanović was a twelve year old child from a small village in Bukovica which was located in northern Dalmatia, Croatia in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. His Serb family were peasant farmers, and they all worked the land and herded cattle together. Ilija, the oldest, had three sisters, a brother, and a dog named Šarov. Miraculously, all but his father survived the war. His memoir is punctuated with poems and songs from his childhood that he learned in the camp. In July, 1941 his village had been encircled by members of the fascist Ustaša. The Ustaša were Croats who supported the Axis powers during the war and operated the puppet fascist state, the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), created after the Axis invasion of Yugoslavia on April 6, 1941. The opposition force, the Partizans, was comprised of a variety of ethnic and religious groups and had the support of the Allied powers despite its communist leanings. The Ustaša separated out the men, women, and children. In addition to adult men, individuals who appeared to be injured were assumed to have been fighting against the Ustaša and were immediately killed or sent to prison camps. Older male children were also taken from their mothers, and sent to the prison camp Jasenovac. It was easier to get the children to follow the Ustaša to the camp, as they were told that they were being taken to the Red Cross for food and supplies.

Jasenovac was a concentration camp established in Slovenia by the Ustaša forces and the government of the NDH to get rid of Serbs, Jews, Gypsies, and other undesirable citizens. Current estimates place the number of murders committed by the Ustaša regime in Jasenovac between 77,000 and 99,000 in the period from 1941 to 1945.[18] On April 22, 1945 fifteen year old

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[17] Lawrence L. Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 3.

[18] "Jasenovac," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed November 20, 2016, https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005449.

Ilija was one of the lucky few who escaped from Jasenovac during a prisoner revolt. While some prisoners escaped, most were killed during the uprising and shortly thereafter. Leaving no survivors in the camps, guards dismantled the remaining three Jasenovac camps and fled from incoming Partizan forces.[19]

Violence in the Camp

Death

In Jasenovac, as in Nazi concentration camps, death of the prisoners was often the end goal or result. The lives of prisoners were reduced to bare life, without rights or value, and they were free to be disposed of. During his three years at the camp, Ilija Ivanović witnessed hundreds of deaths, many of them his peers, relatives, classmates, and adults who tried to protect the children. Ilija notes that they killed everyone in the camp indiscriminately, "especially Jews, Serbs, and Gypsies" who comprised a majority of the prison population of the camp and were considered racially inferior by the fascist Croats, who strove to create a racially pure Croatia.[20] Ilija was separated from other children in the camp because he had completed four years of education in his village, and was thus considered useful as a potential tradesman. Ilija studied under the camp barber, learning how to shave the Ustaša guards, which allowed him to survive. Other children were not as lucky. Children were used as labor to harvest crops and were killed when they became unuseful, or when there were simply too many children. Bodies of prisoners were used to fuel the camp, and their only worth was their biopolitical value. Ilija's young cousin Branko was one such child who harvested the fields, being forced to stay outside day and night

[19] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 74.
[20] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 54.

during cold weather with barely any clothing, before finally being driven to Gradina, one of the mass grave sites, to be killed.[21]

Increases in killing occurred seasonally, for example, they increased during the autumn after the harvest when fewer bodies were needed by the camp to pick crops.[22] Even those in specialized trades were not immune to seasonal culling of prisoners. Ustaša authorities interviewed the young boys individually, asking their name, age, and job before arbitrarily deciding who would live or die in a process called *nastup*. After being sorted, one of Ilija's school friends Milovan Šinik ran from one group to the other, unsure of which group would live to see the next day.

> "I was thinking about Milovan and wondering why he went to the other group and whether, if he hadn't gone there, our group would have been taken to Gradina [the mass grave site]. Maybe the Ustaša lieutenant decided at the moment when Milovan was trying to find salvation. Anyway, they didn't really care which group would be sent to death. The important thing was that the number of boys was cut down because winter was coming and they needed less manpower."[23]

Authorities in the camp were not bound by law to hold trials or determine guilt- the children were reduced to mere bodies, bare life that was worthless, to be gotten rid of when their physical labor was no longer needed. As a space of exception, Jasenovac operated as both internal and external to law. Ilija seems to be aware of this to a degree and states, "were were just as sheep in a pen that the butcher was killing when he wanted. That one stayed alive in the evening didn't mean he would stay alive in the morning."[24] Eventually, the process of being lined up and separated into groups to live and groups to die became a regular occurrence, which everyone dreaded.

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[21] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 54-55.
[22] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 59.
[23] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 60.
[24] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 61, 130.

Occasionally, the young boys were forced to join the general *nastup* of all prisoners in the camp during the fall, or when the Ustaša had lost a fight with the Partizans and were feeling vindictive. Every general *nastup* reduced the number of prisoners by 300-500 people. Eventually, Ilija's supervisors in the combination barber-locksmith shop decided to protect him from the *nastup* by hiding him in the shop. If they had been caught hiding him it would mean death, but the risk was worth taking because death was "lurking in the *nastup*, too."[25] Selections for death were not isolated to the organized *nastup*, Ustaša would come into rooms in the middle of the night and taking random prisoners out to be killed.[26] Ilija recalls the following lines from his time in the camp:

> "In *nastup*!
> In *nastup*!
> It is thundering from all sides.
> From Ustašas yelling,
> Jasenovac is screaming.
> Toward the gathering place
> Lines are going
> On many legs, chains are dreadfully clattering.
> Gallows are ready, ropes are dangling,
> Nooses are opened. Silence." [27]

If prisoners did not die at Gradina, they were often taken to the *granik*, or dock leading to the Sava River. Prisoners were killed with mallets or knives and thrown into the river until the bodies made a dam.[28] Between July 1942 and the fall, out of the 400 children who arrived at the camp only 54 still lived. By fall 1944, the women and children who were captured were taken to Jasenovac only to be immediately sent to the killing fields. Only the strongest men were

[25] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 110-114.
[26] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 131.
[27] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 134.
[28] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 62.

temporarily spared, though most ultimately died in the camps as well.[29] Prisoners in Jasenovac worked to produce war supplies which were then used in turn by Ustaša camp authorities to kill them, such as chains, knives, and mallets.[30] The brutal methods of murder in the camp highlights the camp as a space of exception, where the extreme can become the daily norm.

Torture

Torture constituted a second area where the space of exception and the normalization of extremes were visible. Ilija had to get water at a pump that was near the solitary confinement cages and torture areas, and witnessed various methods of torture employed by the Ustaša authorities.[31] Solitary confinement was a popular method of torture. In solitary, prisoners were deprived of water and were given one bowl of soup per day, saltier than it should be to increase the prisoner's dehydration. The room was covered in lice which would suck blood from the prisoner and when the prisoner was close to death, they would move him back to the camp to gain strength. After he grew a little stronger, they would take him back to solitary and repeat the process until he died.[32] Guards would also burn the chest of prisoners with irons, cut off noses, ears, and eyes, stab nails under finger and toenails, and force prisoners to sit on a bayonet and die slowly. Rats were used to torture people. Prison authorities bound prisoners to a board and tied the board to a table. Then they would expose his skin and put a rat on his stomach under an iron pan, weighing the pan down so the rat couldn't escape, and warm the kettle with a soldering iron. The rat would panic, and claw through the prisoner's stomach to try to escape.

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[29] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 135.
[30] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 57.
[31] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 98.
[32] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 97.

Torture in the camp was a manifestation of the reduction of rights of prisoners in the name of security of the state, as in Nazi concentration camps. The extreme situation of Jasenovac as a space of exception allowed the authorities to dictate a new normal of daily life, which often included torture and inhumane practices as guards were not held responsible under the law. However, in the space of exception everyone, including prison guards, can be pulled into the dehumanization from bare life. The analysis of prison guards is limited by the sources, as this paper examines Jasenovac through the lens of an individual. The ability of the guards to perpetrate torture, especially in particularly gruesome manners, indicates that they too lived a bare life.

Musselmann

Figures who stand at the threshold between life and death, human and inhuman, in the camp are often referred to as musselmann, or Muslim.[33] The origins of this term is not particularly clear. Holocaust survivor and writer Primo Levi uses musselmann in his writing about the camp, and the origin has been suggested to be French legal history, although no one knows the true linguistic origin.[34] This term is not connected to the religious group, but became used to describe the shells of people left at the camp, those who were technically alive but in effect dead. Ilija does not use this term, but notes the prisoners that he considers to be "live skeletons", including the communists who were tortured in solitary confinement before being hanged. [35] Those individuals often had difficult jobs such as building a new dam near the camp, digging the ground and moving heavy wheelbarrows of dirt. If a prisoner fell while carting dirt,

[33] Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz.*
[34] Jill Jarvis, "Remnants of Muslims: Reading Agamben's Silence," *New Literary History* 45 (2014): 707-728.
[35] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 81, 133.

Ustaša would order other prisoners to pile dirt on him and bury him alive, building live people into the dam. Often, body parts visibly stuck out of the dam. One poem Ilija remembers is:

> "Skeletons walking,
> Chains clanging,
> Legs captured in chains,
> Slaves are building a dam of death,
> Beaten with whips, they are working and working,
> Slaves are tripping, the skin holding the bones,
> And Ustaša's whips are burning naked backs.
> 'I mustn't fall down,' a skeleton whispers to himself.
> 'I wouldn't get up from this mud.'" [36]

Prisoners are intimately connected to violence in the camp, as bodies are connected within a set space and are exposed to force and control as a consequence of biopolitical power.[37] Bare life is the ultimate end of the camp's process. Nazi efforts and the concentration camp system have been portrayed as highly organized and efficient, with systems in place that will swiftly move and conquer as well as dispose of undesirable citizens. However, what is at the heart of this system is chaos and unpredictability, and it is this unpredictability which springs from the gray area of exception which made the devastating loss of human life and dehumanizing treatment of prisoners possible. The violence which results from spaces of exception is a pure violence, a blurring of logic and praxis, which results in violence without limits, What matters are the relations and redistributions of power and violence that the space of the camp both reflects and enables.[38] Once the prisoners are turned into bare life and exposed to the violence of the camp, it produces a form of resistance against the power structure forced on them, that of counter-conduct.

The in-between status of this space results in prisoners being unnameable and unclassifiable because they do not fit into a set system in general society. When prisoners cannot

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[36] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 81.
[37] Debrix, "Topologies of vulnerability," 444-459.
[38] Debrix, "Topologies of vulnerability," 444-459.

fit into a paradigm, they become spare life and can be disposed of without consequence. Spaces of exception are marked by a lack of accountability on the part of the sovereign power. Authorities avoid responsibility for the consequences of the spaces of exception by not removing formal and general law, but instead by simply not making decisions and therefore claiming indecision is not action.[39] These prisoners whose lives now have no real value are used as fuel in the biopolitical matrix that is governmentality and spaces of exception. The prisoners were translated into a biological value, which then fed the "void at the core" of the camp, the source of power of the space of exception, which needed the biopower to function.[40] The core is considered a void because of its in-between state, it lacks substance because it is neither one thing nor the other.

Bare life and the musselmann are not without critique as there continued to exist differences among those with bare life. Agamben argues that bare life is in every being, but according to Lemke does not clarify the process of distinguishing between different levels of value in life.[41] It neglects those who have legal rights, such as prison guards, who also experience bare life within the camp.[42] It is insufficient to draw the boundary between natural being and legal existence, as the camp is not a solid border between political life and bare life.[43]

In the early and mid-twentieth century, scientific racism was elevated as a modern and advanced method of thinking about people and society. Consequently, eugenics became normalized in the form of state policies.[44] Governments employed eugenicists to study

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[39] Claudia Aradau, "Law transformed: Guantanamo and the 'other' exception," *Third World Quarterly* 28 (2007): 489-50.
[40] Claudio Minca,"Geographies of the camp." *Political Geography* 49 (2015): 74-83.
[41] Lemke, *Biopolitics,* 58.
[42] Lemke, *Biopolitics,* 60-61.
[43] Lemke, *Biopolitics,* 54.
[44] Maria Bucur, *Eugenics and Modernization in Interwar Romania* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010).

populations and advise on how to best improve the national stock to eventually produce the ideal citizen and person. In this respect, the initial premise of Nazi racial theory is not atypical of the period. The camps, however, are an extreme representation of racial theories, and an attempt to get rid of undesirable individuals by both modern scientific methods, as well as base brutal violence.[45] Foucault argues that some lives gain value as the other is devalued, as it makes life healthier and purer.[46] This racism is a precondition of the right to kill, as in the prison camps. Different types of bodies had different levels of freedom and opportunity in the camp structure.[47] Nazi prison camps were designed with a rationalized order of space in mind, planned to maximize control and discipline while increasing isolation, which produces bare life.[48] The camp aimed to obtain intensive control of motion and used violence to educate, contain, and segregate in an attempt to create "a new kind of animal", to reinterpret the "fundamental relationship between the human and animal realms." [49]

Counter-Conduct

Identity

Identity serves as a counter-conduct within the prison camps. Governmentality exists and is evident in this space through apparatuses of security and counter-conducts because as Lemke asserts, the camp is not a firm boundary between natural and political life.[50] Identity as counter-conduct is evident in Ilija's association with the Partizans and the lessons he received in Serb

[45] Marion Fresia and Andreas Von Kanel, "Beyond Space of Exception? Reflections on the Camp through the Prism of Refugee Schools," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 29 (2016): 250-272.
[46] Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*. (New York: Picador, 2003,) 255-256.
[47] Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended,* 256-258.
[48] Paolo Giaccaria and Claudio Minca, "Topographies/topologies of the camp: Auschwitz as a spatial threshold." *Political Geography* 30.1 (2011): 3-12.
[49] Minca,"Geographies of the camp," 74-83.
[50] Lemke, *Biopolitics.*

culture within the camp. Ilija, as a twelve year old, did not relate much to the Partizan forces fighting outside of the walls of the camp. He vaguely understood that they were fighting the Ustaša, which was good, but he did not seem to have a positive view of communists in the camp, nor associate the communists with the Partizans. However, because he was a Serb, Ilija was frequently beaten by the Croat Ustaša guards for, as they claimed, being a Partizan and having a father who was assumed to be a Partizan.[51] As a counter-conduct to being directed to not be a Partizan, Ilija began to increasingly associate himself with them.

The adult prisoners responsible for groups of child prisoners were instructed by the Ustaša to read the children articles praising Germans and the Ustaša forces. However, Mitar the man in charge of Ilija's group, would instead talk to them about "heroes from epic songs about our people."[52] Mitar worked to instill a sense of Serb identity and pride in the children, and told them that the Ustaša were trying to destroy the Serb nation even though it was clear that the Ustaša were losing the war.[53] He taught them Partizan songs, and told them that all people were equal and that they did not have to be separated because of religion.[54] Identity in the prison camp was hardened as a counter-conduct; the Ustaša authorities wished to direct the identity of prisoners towards one which supported their cause, but inevitably created prisoners who felt themselves to be part of the Partizan collective and Serb nation.

Counter-conduct, as described by Foucault in *Security, Territory, and Population*, is a response to power directing subjects or populations in behavior, belief, and action.[55] It is, in a way, a rejection of the imposition of norms from above and is not a passive phenomenon.

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[51] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 64, 74.
[52] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 99.
[53] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 135.
[54] Ivanović, *Witness to Jasenovac's Hell,* 99, 129.
[55] Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1977-78*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Conduct is a duality, it can be applied to oneself, and used to control others. It adds an ethical component to the notion of resistance, which in and of itself is not a reaction to power alone. In the case of Nazi prison camps counter-conducts emerged because of the system they were able to impose as a space of exception.

Counter-conduct constitutes a form of defying norms, however it is not the same as overt rebellion or revolt.[56] Counter-conduct allows for the internal rejection of norms, it is not exclusive to external action. As power dictates that one should become highly individualized as a number, a counter-conduct is the self-association with a collective such as the ethnic identity of Serb, or group identity of Partizan. This internal collective structure works to resist the attempts of the camp hierarchy and power to control their conduct. Both conduct and counter-conduct and the power and resistance relationship they represent are mutually reliant; there cannot be one without the other. Counter-conduct can be seen at a doctrinal level, in individual behavior, or in organized groups, such as the *we* visible in these memoirs.[57] Power and resistance are not binary, located on opposite poles. Rather, resistance is already located in power because forms of resistance rely upon the strategies, techniques, and power relationships they oppose. Counter-conducts help to reveal nuances within power, rather than focusing on a binary of power.[58]

Spaces of exception inspire violence and forces of counter-conduct to resist power. These ideas provide a mechanism to study historical issues of identity. Examining the hardening of identity by utilizing spaces of exception allows for a new perspective which gives light to the experiences of the camp on a personal level rather than from a general theoretical level. Spaces of exception are often examined from the perspective of physical geography, where meanings

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[56] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 191-226.
[57] Al Davidson, "In praise of counter-conducts," *History of the Human Sciences* 24 (2011): 25-41.
[58] Sonjak Pieck, "To be led differently: neoliberalism, road construction and counter-conducts in Peru," *Geoforum* 64 (2013): 304-313.

behind divisions of space are analyzed. I instead look a narrative example of an individual who is part of the biopolitical body in the camp rather than examine the mass.

Conclusions

Jasenovac, similar to Nazi prison camps, operated as a space of exception and warrants further study. The methodology of studying Nazi camps as spaces of exception can be usefully applied to prison camps operated by other states, such as Omarska which operated in the 1990s in Bosnia and Goli Otok which operated during the socialist era in Yugoslavia. Bare life and the musselmann in the prison camp are not as clearly defined as Agamben argues in his works. Identity existed as an example of counter-conduct, which functioned as an apparatus of governmentality within the camp. Political life cannot be kept out of the camp walls, although bare life affects all in the camp including prison guards.

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